

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 07395 231537Z
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-07 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
/040 W

-----232047Z 007199 /64

R 231340Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3570
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 7395

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, IN
SUBJECT: BOMBAY PORT STRIKE ENDS -- COMMENTS OF GEORGE FERNANDES

REF: NEW DELHI 7315

1. THE 11-DAY STRIKE AT THE BOMBAY PORT ENDED MAY 21 FOLLOWING
A PERSONAL APPEAL OF THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE WORKERS. DR.
SHANTI PATEL, PRESIDENT OF THE BOMBAY PORT TRUST EMPLOYEES'
UNION, ANNOUNCED THAT THE PM PROMISED THAT HE WOULD PERSONALLY
LOOK INTO THE WORKERS' GRIEVANCES.

2. MOST PRESS ACCOUNTS REPORT THAT ALL THE MAJOR DEMANDS OF
THE WORKERS HAD BEEN CONCEDED. IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE
LABOR COUNSELOR, MAY 20, P AND T MINISTER GEORGE FERNANDES,
WHO PLAYED A ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT THE SETTLEMENT, ALSO SAID
THAT THE WORKERS HAD WON ON ALL IMPORTANT ISSUES. HE
LAMBASTED THE JANATA GOVERNMENT FOR ITS HANDLING OF THE
STRIKE ASKING RHETORICALLY, "HOW DIFFERENT IS THIS FROM THE
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WAY THE INDIRA GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE HANDLED THE PROBLEM?"
FERNANDES BLAMED THE PORT TRUST CHAIRMAN FOR MAKING THE
DISPUTE A MATTER OF HIS PRESTIGE. THE UNION WAS NOT ADVERSE
TO IMPROVING THE PORT'S EFFICIENCY, BUT OBJECTED TO HAVING
CHANGES, AS IN THE MANNING RULES, MADE UNILATERALLY BY THE
MANAGEMENT. FERNANDES CONCEDED THAT THE NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS
OF THE STRIKE DID NOT REFLECT SUCH A REASONABLE POSTURE

ON THE PART OF THE UNION.

3. IN FERNANDES' OPINION, THE BOMBAY PORT STRIKE LIKE MANY OTHERS AROUND THE COUNTRY WAS MAINLY THE RESULT OF WORKER FRUSTRATIONS PENT UP DURING THE EMERGENCY. HE DID NOT THINK THAT THE PROBLEM HAD REACHED WORRISOME PROPORTIONS. THE DISPUTES DID INDICATE THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD YET TO FORMULATE A LABOR POLICY. IN PART THIS WAS FOR WANT OF SUFFICIENT TIME, AS IT WAS NECESSARY FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO DEVELOP A POLICY IN CONJUNCTION WITH LABOR. THROUGHOUT HE INSISTED THAT THE JANATA GOVERNMENT WAS OBLIGED TO DEAL GENEROUSLY

WITH LABOR, AS TO A LARGE DEGREE IT OWED ITS ELECTION TO TRADE UNIONS. ASKED TO ENUMERATE WHICH UNIONS PLAYED THIS ROLE, FERNANDES CITED THE RAILWAYMEN, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES' UNION, AND A NUMBER OF UNIONS IN THE BOMBAY AREA.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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